

SHAKESPEARE @ THE CHAMIZAL

After viewing the **Outrageous Fortune Theatre Company's 'Tis Shakespearish** production, extend the experience by inviting **The Chamizal, Shakespeare and his cast of characters into your classroom.**

Many of Shakespeare's plays are considered tragedies because the main characters elicit either our pity or our fear. In *Romeo and Juliet* we feel for the ill-fated Juliet and Romeo. At the beginning of the play, the Chorus sets the mood by informing the audience that there is a feud between two families in Verona - a town in Italy. Amidst the warring sides, two "star-cross'd lovers" will die for love of one another, and it is only their deaths that will bring peace to Verona.

A testament to open communication among nations, The Chamizal National Memorial is dedicated to commemorating the peaceful settlement of a long-standing dispute over the location of the boundary between Mexico and the United States. Both nations relied on negotiation and fostered cultural understanding to resolve a conflict that might

otherwise have ended in a war.

In the Classroom

Option 1:

After reading *Romeo and Juliet*, the class will identify specific parts of the narrative where communicating openly would have been a better way to resolve conflicts among the feuding families (examples would include Juliet's mother listening to the pleas of her daughter not to marry Paris and Romeo's pleas for Mercutio not to fight). Students will respond to the text and class discussion with a paragraph summarizing what they learned from the text. Students, individually or in groups, will then write "What If" scenarios for the select parts of the narrative they identified during class discussion. Encourage students to illustrate how the conflicts could have been resolved differently.

Option 2:

After reading *Romeo and Juliet*, the class will produce a version of the play that casts the United States and Mexico as the feuding Capulets and Montagues. However, focus the disagreement on the boundary dispute between

the two countries instead of not having a specific cause for the tension between the two parties. Divide the class into different parts of a production team: script writers, set designers, poster and invitation designers, costume designers and actors. Encourage students to write a script that follows the plot of the play closely but also incorporates how the two nations were able to peacefully resolve the dispute. Invite parents and other community members to view the student production.

Resources:

Arts Edge (Kennedy Center)
artsedge.kennedy-center.org/exploring/randj/story/synopsis.html

Chamizal National Memorial
www.nps.gov/cham/index.htm

Romeo and Juliet: For Kids
(Shakespeare Can Be Fun Series)
by Lois Burdett. Firefly Books Ltd, 1998. *Recommended for Ages 9-12*

Chamizal National Memorial

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

